

CHAPTER 4

AFRICAN HISTORY AND GLOBAL HISTORY: REVISITING PARADIGMS

Omar Gueye

This chapter on global history and its relation to African history attempts to understand the epistemological link between these two fields.¹ The various “African histories” as they have been written over the past half century—local, regional or national in scope—have had a problematic relation to world history. This is partly due to the paucity of connections made by scholars between the subject of their study and global developments, and partly because these African histories, even when acknowledged at all, too often lacked scholarly legitimacy prior to the work of the first generation of “Africanists” who sought to synthesize them.

Before 1960, African history, barely recognized as a legitimate field of study, was the object of polemical attacks. However, after long ideological and methodological debates, both African and foreign Africanists have since secured a central place for Africa in the writing of world history. The guardians of tradition remained the conservators of African history, while various historical “schools” were its propagators. The earliest figures we might identify as African historians—ancient authors like Herodotus, Diodorus Siculus and Strabo—took an interest in Africa, though their works focused on its Mediterranean region and on maritime and terrestrial expeditions, whose impacts still divide historians.² Millennia later, pioneers like Leo Frobenius and Maurice Delafosse were among the first to attempt to move from fragmented local histories and present an image of the continent as a whole.³ By the middle of the twentieth century, African writers like Cheikh Anta Diop attempted to resituate Africa, the cradle of humanity, within global history.⁴ Excellent synthetic works followed in the 1960s and 1970s, in both French (Robert and Marianne Cornevin, Hubert Deschamps, Charles Julien and Joseph Ki-Zerbo) and English (Basil Davidson, E. W. Bovill, John Donnell Fage and Raymond Oliver).⁵ In spite of methodological difficulties, mental frontiers and ideological barriers, the most important currents of African history were thus finally incorporated into the currents of global history. Increasingly, the view that knowledge, in all its plurality and universality, is impossible to silo has *de facto* integrated the civilizations of the entire world, whatever be their particular characteristics. *Longue-durée* investigations have studied not only the influence of the precolonial civilizations of the continent—interrupted by a long phase of dependence and colonial control—but also the postindependence period.⁶ African historians have adopted an epistemological stance that has eventually enabled the emergence of the field of the global history of the continent into the legitimate domain of specialization.

Global History, Globally

This article examines (1) the trajectory of African history, long characterized by foreign control; (2) methodological questions and ideological disputes that punctuated this trajectory; (3) the pioneering role of specific historical schools of thought like the “Dakar school”; (4) the passage from “peripheral” to global histories of Africa and, finally, (5) through the events of May 1968, an example of what this global history with an African focus can look like. Though hardly exhaustive, the chapter reviews the literature broadly, from the first writings on Africa to the attempts to elaborate a general African history. In the context of the globalization of knowledge, the legitimacy of this approach is justified by the necessity of transcending the isolation to which African history seemed condemned for all too long and by breaking with understandings of Africa as a “periphery”⁷ of the “developed” world.

My objective is not to rewrite African history—a goal yet to be achieved—but to reflect on global history. I address this issue from the perspective of a generation of historians who have not participated in the nationalist or narrow ideological battles of the 1950s and 1960s and are thus less ideologically committed. The first generation of African historians paired political and scholarly engagement, as their circumstances demanded, and an anticolonialist and nationalist agenda influenced the different phases of African historiography. I do not claim to analyze exhaustively all the historical perspectives already developed—long discussed (and disputed) by our predecessors—but to present several issues that allow us to propose a “re-problematization” of the writing of African history embedded within a contemporary world context and the currents shaping global history.

Re-problematizing African history

African history has long suffered from a deficit of legitimacy. The subjugation, indeed the marginalization, of the continent has had lasting repercussions on scholarly understandings of Africa, its history and its place in the world, downplaying its global importance. In part this is true because under colonization African history was written from a Eurocentric point of view, which, through the use of the Hamitic myth, diffusionism and other theories, claimed the inferiority of Africans.⁸ However, Africans themselves also employed a number of approaches to writing the history of Africa, typically either national history or regional history or histories of localities, that lacked reference to other regions and approaches.⁹ Moreover, all African histories were shaped by the education of their authors in the metropole, the site where almost all local elites were trained.¹⁰ And alongside the fragmentation of these various “African histories,” the deficit of legitimacy was also rooted in methodological questions, particularly the problem of sources and oral sources.¹¹ Each of these constraints worked against the writing of a global history, a state of affairs that lasted until significant transformations shook the status quo in the middle of the twentieth century.

Since their inception, attempts to understand Africa were undertaken in the name of scientific curiosity and of the European and Arab need to understand relevant

peoples and spaces in imperial contexts.¹² This infiltration took place over centuries, from antiquity to the early-modern period, and continued through the colonial and neocolonial periods. The need to understand a conquered territory was the impetus for creating institutions like the French "Académie coloniale," conceived as a laboratory of study dedicated to the colonial empire.¹³ This hierarchical knowledge system operated until Africans themselves seized control of their destiny and rearticulated their own politics through material culture and history. The moment in which young Africans rebelled, calling into question the founding principles of this authority, greatly resembled the student movement of May 1968, to which we will return.

Against the backdrop of this history, several generations of African historians framed their agenda in terms of "recognition," seeking to resituate the continent's historical significance during and in the wake of independence struggles. They succeeded impressively in this enormous undertaking and eventually secured the legitimacy they had long sought. Paradoxically, the sense of being allotted the "smallest portion" of the history of the world may have been a powerfully mobilizing force, accelerating debates on the historicity of the peoples of the continent.¹⁴ In particular, like many of their colleagues throughout the world, African historians called into question the dominant ideology of Eurocentrism:

The fashion of ethnocentrism in history was shaken more in North America than elsewhere. In many schools, the old "history of the world," which was in reality nothing but a history of "Western civilization," gave way throughout the 1960s to new and more authentic currents that situated history in a global perspective, where Africa was placed on equal footing with other large cultural zones like South Asia or the East.¹⁵

The work of writing African history has thus succeeded paradigms that place African peoples in the context of a "backward" continent, a "late arrival" in the forward march of the world at an economic, political, social and especially mental level, as the president of the French Republic suggested at a 2007 speech in Dakar.¹⁶ A grasp of African history is thus essential to understanding global history and its various approaches, convictions and inevitable imperfections.¹⁷

Stereotypes continue to shape negative perceptions of the continent, of its men and women. Many writers have thus worked to discover the continent through an "invention of Africa."¹⁸ But until recently, few in world history have conducted meticulous studies of Africa itself.¹⁹

Of course, difficulties remain. Some are methodological: admittedly, there is often a gap between extant sources and the goal of characterizing Africa's role in the history of the world. However, we should not see this gap as setting an upper bound on the achievements of African history, but rather as posing a challenge to African historians, allowing them to better understand and appreciate the perspectives offered by global history. Indeed, the success of global history is a positive development for African history. It makes possible a true epistemological interconnection between different

regional and local histories. A bridge between the continent and the rest of the world has been reestablished: increasingly scholars bring Africa into the global histories they tell.

Other difficulties are material. For this portion of the “Third World” that still carries the full stigma of underdevelopment, the question of resources to support the work of historical scholarship is acute. Widespread poverty inhibits the development of scholarship and research, and even when undertaken, this research covers different portions of a country and different “cultural zones” of the continent unevenly. Typically, references to “Africa” tend to signify “black Africa,” situated “south of the Sahara.” This perception belonged not only to Europeans or foreigners but also to North and South Africans—the “white” portions of the continent.²⁰ It is this “black Africa” that research has neglected.

Finally, the persistence of colonial epistemologies that distort debates on the “historicity” of African peoples has reinforced these inequities.²¹ Many works have diminished the significance of the Nilotic thesis, precursor of the medieval golden age of the great African empires, deeming it a mere flight of fancy.²² Others have taken South Africa and North Africa, the two extremities of the continent with substantial revenues and sophisticated human resources, as the reality to which evocations of a “positive” Africa refer. It is often tempting to declare that only “white” Africa understood the role of research in participating at a high level in the writing of global history. Certainly, many of these trends have begun to stabilize or reverse themselves due to renewed interest in African studies that has developed in several institutes, but much work remains.

In spite of these difficulties, the question of the “historicity” or “marginality” of the continent seems to have been definitively answered: Africa is now considered part of global history and no longer an entirely separate entity, as it seemed to be for several centuries. This growing interest has led to a flourishing of research entities such as Departments of African History in universities across Africa and the world, as well as Centers for African Studies, especially in Europe and the United States.²³ To these we must add Africanist researchers, African and non-African, who understand other fields of research and global history along with an increasingly large, well-documented and meticulously detailed understanding of African history. We thus must recognize the numerous contributions, beginning as early as the nineteenth century, that have enriched debates and facilitated striking advances in African historical studies—contributions not only by historians but also by practitioners of anthropology, glottochronology, lexicostatistics, ethno-archaeology and other fields.²⁴ Thus, in the new context of world history, developing a global perspective allows us to clarify our understandings of the continent and to reconsider our paradigms of and interest in Africa.²⁵

Which history for a new Africa?

During and after the anticolonial struggles of the mid-twentieth century, the most fundamental task African historians faced was to define what “Africa” meant, and to move beyond the racial qualification “black” and the corresponding geographical qualification “sub-Saharan.” It was essential to agree on the space in question as the subject of historical

inquiry, and on which other disciplines to engage. Shaped by dominant paradigms and preoccupations, several types of history, both “sectional” and general, emerged at national and African levels, universal and global levels and at the level of linguistic zones (Anglophone, Francophone, Lusophone, Hispanophone and Arabophone).

Consolidating a singular vision of Africa was thus difficult, even for African historians themselves. On the same continent and in the same geographical reality, several visions of Africa were juxtaposed, with multiple histories centered on a given country or geographical region. African historians continued to express themselves within the educational framework provided by their respective metropolises—Paris, London, Lisbon and so on. Only later, particularly from the 1970s onward, did African history become a credible field of academic specialization and a general history of the continent was written, notably in multivolume works from Cambridge University Press (*Cambridge History of Africa*) and UNESCO (*Histoire générale de l'Afrique*).²⁶ In the same spirit, Bogumil Jewsiewicki and David Newbury called for collective reflection on African historiography and posed an important question to orient research—namely, “which history” for “which Africa?”²⁷ All generations of African historians have responded in some way to this problematic question.²⁸

Various “schools” played an overwhelming part in this process, which at first largely obeyed the logic of colonial paternalism before the work of correction and rewriting was undertaken by anticolonial historians. Writers oriented toward global (or globalizing) history were thus left to define appropriate contours and paradigms. With this in mind, it is easier to understand the militant perspective of the first generations of African historians, such as Abdoulaye Ly and especially Cheikh Anta Diop, who led scholarly debates in a highly fraught political context, often generating lively controversy.²⁹ Abdoulaye Ly initiated a dialogue on the theorizing of capitalist connections among continents, inspired by laws of capital accumulation that regulated the dialectical relation between an expansionist capitalist center and a periphery dominated and exploited by it.³⁰ Cheikh Anta Diop's principal thesis rested on the cultural unity of black Africa and the historicity of the continent running back to the earliest civilizations (with pharaonic Egypt taken to be “black”). It inspired many writings against widely held notions of Africa as static since the dawn of time.³¹ The pioneers of this militant history saw themselves as the avant-garde of the opposition to colonial ideologies.

The pioneers often faced ostracism in response to their investigations. However, young writers like Joseph Ki-Zerbo, Djibril Tamsir Niane, Mbaye Guèye, Oumar Kane, Ibrahima Baba Kaké, Elikia M'Bokolo, Boubacar Barry, Pierre Kipré, Abdoulaye Bathily, Thierno Diallo, Sékéné Mody Cissoko and others followed their senior colleagues Abdoulaye Ly and Cheikh Anta Diop to solidify once and for all the legitimacy of “writing an African history by Africans.”³² Many followed them, including a wave of researchers from French universities who participated enthusiastically in the creation of the “Dakar school.”³³ Today, a significant diaspora of African historians lives abroad, especially in the United States, which is also home to a large number of non-African Africanists.³⁴ Altogether, their work has helped to ensure the long-term insertion of the continent into global history.

Long-standing debates and lively disputes took place, often leading to extreme positions on either side, notably among African writers reacting vigorously against their opponents. An ideological approach, more political than scholarly, became commonplace, along with the danger such an approach entails—namely adopting extreme positions as revenge against many centuries of ostracism and obscurantism. After “emancipation,” “by a sort of talionic law, some young African states seemed to eliminate anything resembling the histories of former colonizers from their curricula.”³⁵ In the French case, for instance, new states sought to establish an African program in place of the old colonial program exemplified by the phrase “Our ancestors the Gauls” (see below for more).³⁶

History thereby served as an ideological weapon, with the *decolonization of African history* increasingly tending toward *Afrocentrism*.³⁷ Indeed, in the effort to rehabilitate African civilizations, there was a great desire to replace an external account of the origins of African civilization, “granted” after centuries of foreign occupation, with an internal one. The field needed a scholarly approach to contain this tendency toward an extremism that ultimately threatened to harm the cause of African history that it claimed to defend.

African historians came to understand this need to free themselves from increasingly obsolete quarrels and from the trap of historical traditions that were more ideological than scholarly. As the political and institutional context changed from the 1970s onward, and the task at hand was to establish greater scholarly rigor without becoming mired in the guilt-inducing blame of the West, nostalgia for an idyllic past or simple self-aggrandizement.³⁸ In this quest for recognition and globality, historians were concerned to avoid trading one myth for another. To replace “Our ancestors the Gauls” with “Our ancestors the Egyptians” would indeed be inadequate!

“Our ancestors the Gauls”

Africa’s centuries-long experience of domination was not only political and economic but also cultural and scholarly. The metropole subjected all dominated territories to its influence, symbolized at the highest level, in the case of French Africa, by the program of cultural assimilation that taught all children in French colonies the phrase “Our ancestors the Gauls.”³⁹

The minds of young African students were molded to a colonial ideology that sought the formation of a good “subject”—either “assimilated” by the colonizer or “alienated” by the colonists.⁴⁰ Indeed, “history as it was taught in African schools prior to decolonialization took Europe as its setting, the French, English, Germans, and others as its actors; and, occasionally, [inserted] the ‘African kinglets,’ Samory ‘the bloody,’ Behanzin, Elhadj Omar.”⁴¹ With African history moored to a European framework that made Africa either inferior or invisible, historian Ibrahima Baba Kaké argued that “we may wonder whether, through this ‘metropolitan’ history, a history of African communities exists. We barely see signs of it, in any case, at most glimpsing it in slave traders or princes, outlined over a handful of pages, anonymous and abstract.”⁴² African history was a story above all about the foreign, and especially colonial, presence in Africa. The colonial history school

was a site of acculturation and of the legitimation of foreign domination, the laboratory for the testing of different colonial theories and practices. The avant-garde of the later political awakening were themselves conscious of being products of this colonial school, educated with the "colonial library" and "colonial textbooks" before coming to denounce them.

Beginning in the 1940s, Alioune Diop, Cheikh Anta Diop, Aimé Césaire and their contemporaries broke with dominant colonial paradigms, leading the fight for a black consciousness and an end to the inferiority complex African youth had internalized.⁴³ The *Négritude* movement of Léopold Sédar Senghor, Aimé Césaire and Léon Gontran Damas, though controversial, operated in this framework alongside Pan-Africanist movements seeking the rebirth or affirmation of a black cultural identity. These actions had numerous ramifications for Africa and its diaspora, expanding the field of struggle to affirm Africans' cultural identity on an ideological, nationalist and Pan-Africanist level. In the 1960s and early 1970s, Africa was the focal point for the millions of descendants of slaves who wished to remember in order to live or survive in a society where racism justified their poverty.⁴⁴ Not by accident did black Americans play such a large role in the fight to affirm a black and Pan-African cultural identity.⁴⁵

It was in this political fight against colonialism and neocolonialism in Africa that history took on such an ideologically charged role. Africans had to reappropriate their historical conscience by breaking with borrowed ideologies. And beyond the production of knowledge, consciousness of history plays an essential role in envisioning the future of the peoples of the world:

Knowledge of history is culturally liberating and contributes to the constructions of founding myths and national consciousness. It is in the name of their glorious past that the Indians of South America wished to throw off Iberian domination; it is in the Indian past that the intellectuals (*boubous*) of the nineteenth century sought their weapons; Japan drew supplementary force from the Samurai code to resist competition from their American rivals; and Africa sought a shattered unity in the memory of its empires deposed by the slave trade and especially by colonization; and thus, the former Gold Coast became Ghana.⁴⁶

The concerns of history are thus strategic. The desire for self-awareness and affirmation was one of the primary motivations to produce "local," mostly national, histories that preceded the broader histories with more globalist approaches of the ensuing decades. Thus, a number of histories were written in the name of the peoples of the new nations that reflected instead the logics of more local identities. However, in many cases, an (often equivocal) official history was taken up by emerging nation-states, giving meaning to the territory and its future and anointing (often controversial) national heroes. As summarized by Renan, one of the great theorists of the problem of nationalities, "[t]he nation's foundations consist in the community of the past, otherwise known as history."⁴⁷ For the new African nation-states, as for most nation-states, history writing responded to the nationalist project.

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While writing a *General History of Senegal*, for instance, proponents of different national schools of thought clashed tacitly in the committee that guided its construction,⁴⁸ each school seeking legitimacy by privileging its own sources and methods. Professional historians educated at the French school that created the modern state; the Arabizing elite, lettered Muslims educated in Arab countries; and traditional elites, *griots* who resisted foreign “sciences,” all contended with one another.⁴⁹ This multiplicity of approaches, sources and methods immediately generated an internally global or even more parochial perspective, the result of a national scholarly compromise between as yet disconnected schools of thought.

But even as national histories were written, sentiments of belonging to one continent—with one destiny, forged by one history, one geography and common struggles—persisted. It was from the perspective of African unity that the newly independent countries elaborated a program of global history for the continent. In the early sixties, for example, the Institute for African and Madagascan Curricula (IPAM) developed a program of study and textbooks designed for young Madagascans and other Africans.⁵⁰

In sum, the feeling of “victimization” and the will to rehabilitate a long-denied past were decisive in the African reawakening. This cause was for some time a central theme for African writers, motivating the writing (or rewriting) of the history of Africa and scornfully rejecting colonial paternalism. However, no historian can long ignore the fundamental contributions to understandings of self and society that inter-societal exchanges have wrought. As Kaké argued, “[a] number of features emerged from the colonial situation: schools, industrialization, rentier culture, transformation of the countryside, railroads, and so on—many subjects that the African historian cannot ignore in his description of African societies.”⁵¹ Thus, despite racial prejudices that have persisted on either side, the openings induced by globalization and long-term contact between peoples were the key to new understandings of the world and its history.

Pioneering role of foreign Africanists

The work of writing African history can only be fully understood by considering contributions from foreign historians. Indeed, “foreign Africanists,” especially Arabs and Europeans, were decisive to conceiving and elaborating the history of the continent, notwithstanding the prejudices that shaped foreign thought and domination. These historians participated enormously in giving African history a global vision.

Arab writers and sources contributed significantly to understandings of African history. A number of written works, known as chronicles or *Tarikh*, prolonged the Arab economic, cultural and religious presence.⁵² Outside of this presence, the Islamic faith spread by Arabs bore in itself a form of globality: it asked the faithful to “seek knowledge as far off as China,” which suggests an openness to the most distant countries of the world.⁵³ In the African version of this advice, Muslims were educated with reference to the universal values embodied in the *Ummah*, the world community of believers who reunite each year in the pilgrimage to Mecca.⁵⁴ Islam was thus another form of globalization that suggested the possibility of a broad openness to Africans, African

history and its writers, Arabs as well as Africans. But these historical forms of expression both were sidelined by the colonial conquest and simultaneously inspired resistance to it, as the most ferocious rebels of West Africa fought colonization under the auspices of Islam (Samori, El hadj Omar, Fodé Kaba, Maba Diakhou Bâ, Ahmadou Bamba and others).

Many Africanists in France and the UK also played a pioneering role in interdisciplinary research, increasingly investing in the field alongside their European and American counterparts. France and England were the primary “centers of African studies” due to their long presence on the continent, which included their participation in precapitalist and capitalist economies, the slave trade, the Industrial Revolution, colonization and the integration of Africa into their imperial systems.⁵⁵ While a monolithic understanding of Eurocentrism has long obscured scholarly and epistemological controversies and disputes among European historians, French Africanists were nonetheless particularly influential in the writing and education of Francophone elites.

Yves Person, and later Catherine Coquery-Vidrovitch and Jean Devisse, offered both in Dakar and Paris a remarkable contribution to the education of generations of historians at the University of Dakar. Similarly important is the pioneering work of Jean Suret-Canale, researcher in African history who published many articles and reference works on the colonial history of the continent; the work of anthropologists like Claude Meillassoux who opened the historiography of the “Dakar school” to the other social sciences; the work of historians Jean Boulègue, Yves Saint-Martin, and Christian Roche; and that of Christian Coulon, Jean Schmitz, and Jean Copans in sociology and anthropology.⁵⁶

The American and Anglo-Saxon school contributed much to the elaboration of African history. More recently, Fred Cooper and Jane Burbank have contributed significant work on empires, in a recent synthesis that adds to the significant research already done by John Donnell Fage, Lord Haley, Michael Crowder, David Robinson, Philip Curtin, Georges Brooks, Allen Howard, Winston McGowan, Walter Rodney, Paul Lovejoy, Immanuel Wallerstein, John Hopkins, Martin Klein, George Wesley-Johnson, Patrick Manning, Lucie Colvin and others.⁵⁷ Transatlantic historians have thus opened a number of perspectives on our knowledge of Africa and on African studies.

Revival of interest in African Studies

The late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries have seen a renewed interest in African studies and African history. Research programs have been most dynamic in the global “North” (especially in Anglophone countries) and are organized around specific objectives and problematics. While this configuration once again allots African researchers the “least share” in the study of the continent, this situation is less detrimental than it was previously. The increasing systematization of disciplines has permitted a

comparison and relativizing of views on Africa that attenuates colonial epistemologies, thereby allowing the continent and its inhabitants to enter prominently into global history.

Alongside these scholarly networks of significant means, others on the continent have survived as well as they could, often sitting neglected (alongside other sectors of the economy). Worse still, former metropolises continue to tacitly (or almost tacitly) exercise the same influence they enjoyed before the “independence” of their ex-territories. The imperative to “decolonize” African history became an urgent goal for those who aspired to the foundational legitimacy of credible scholarship. This goal did not evade African writers who adopted a militant posture, at least in the beginning. They established schools of African history written in French, English, Arabic and other languages. Similarly, alongside oral tradition, historians drew on many African sources written in the Ge'ez, Vai, Bamum and Ajami languages.⁵⁸

A related issue is that the priorities of the nationalist project often exclude these dimensions of scholarly “decolonization,” in part due to many political regimes’ neglect of scholarship and their minimal funding of historical work. The North thus maintains the upper hand in research on African history: it determines the central questions of the field and often even the flow of Africanist researchers, which raises the controversial issue of “brain drain.”⁵⁹ The goal of “decolonizing” African history was not simply to shake off a colonial paternalism that served as a guarantee of scholarly rigor but also to place African history back at the center of global questions to better illustrate the politics of development.

A militant history

The militancy considered in this section was originally an alternative to the objective constraints African historians faced. Their posture of “revolt” presupposed a refusal of the marginality (or the process of marginalization) intrinsic to colonial ideology, whose legacy continued to weigh heavily on the cultural life of the newly “independent” states. Consequently, this refusal implied a central preoccupation, namely: how to find a place on a global scale despite remaining tied to the continent’s subaltern position on the international chessboard? This is certainly an intellectual preoccupation, but one also deeply linked to the nationalist political fight to liberate the continent from all forms of control and domination. It was difficult for African historians to substitute the political and ideological challenges of their countries or the paradigms that guided the construction of the new nation-states and their development.

History contributed notably to the fight for national liberation, with African historians of many generations entering political action. Moreover, confident in their knowledge of their country and the world, many sought the high office of President of the Republic, with occasional success.⁶⁰ African historians engaged in both scholarly and political activity to influence the destiny of their country, their continent and even the world. Marxism was for most both their political philosophy and their model of historical writing, which produced some controversies among African historians who seemed to deny any form

of “intellectual control” or “ideological colonization.” At the same time, references to Marxist ideology signified a tendency to operate within global ideological currents. This militancy and juxtaposition of roles created numerous challenges that remained within the horizon of the paradigms that structured the ideologies of independence: the significant role of politics and the state in the historical processes. African historians still must free themselves from their double subordination—to the ideology of the postcolonial state, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, to the Marxist political opposition that threatens to become as dominant and alienating as the colonial ideology that was fought for centuries.

Although the anticolonial and nationalist project of African historians was largely justified, we must also push back against it and investigate its relevance. The question is whether we seek to deconstruct colonial texts and ideology or instead to write an authentic history that interrogates forms of knowledge and responds to methodological questions facing the discipline. It seems these tasks may be conducted together, with (often-fluctuating) stakes and in contexts characterized by conflict. The militancy was almost certainly justified, especially during a certain period, but the logic of the development of the human sciences recommends that African history be coherently integrated into global trends. Such an approach would understand the continent as an integral part of a global whole rather than as an entirely separate and subaltern region in the development of the world.

Scholarship and militancy: The “Dakar school” examined

The fight for scholarly militancy operated not only at the level of declared intentions but also at the level of structures or mechanisms that operationalized theories conceived for this very goal. It was thus that various “schools” took charge of historical reflections and undertook the work of writing the history of the continent, in part or as a whole. While the universities of Wisconsin (with Jan Vansina or Philip Curtin), Birmingham and SOAS (with John Fage and Roland Olivier) and Paris VII (with Catherine Coquery-Vidrovitch) all claimed paternity of the historical study of Africa, alternative homes for the conception of and writing of Africa history were established on the continent at Ibadan, Dar es Salam, Makerere and Dakar in the wake of the Second World War. Mohamed Sahli operated within this logic, writing a pamphlet (*Decolonizing History*) around 1965 to introduce another way of understanding the history of the Maghreb.⁶¹ Kenneth Onwuka Dike was a pioneer of the schools of African history and one of the founders of the Ibadan school that influenced the writing of Nigerian history.⁶² He was significant for the generation of African historians who sought to separate from the influence of metropolitan and/or Eurocentric schools. Alongside Kenneth Onwuka Dike and his colleague Jacob Ajayi of the Ibadan school, Terence Ranger, Arnold Temu and Walter Rodney of the Dar es Salam school and Bethwell Ogot of the Makerere school and Abdoulaye Ly and Cheikh Anta Diop of the “Dakar school” all actively participated in the work of decolonizing and rewriting African history.

The “Dakar school,” to explore one example in greater detail, brought together a community of scholars from different generations. The expression “the Dakar school” designates one center among many in Africa—Makerere, Ibadan, Dar Es-Salam—where specialists from many disciplines developed scholarship on African societies broadly informed by the ascendance of the anticolonial movement following the Second World War. Like its African counterparts, the “Dakar school” was distinguished by its commitment to unveil the falsifications regarding African societies that were deliberately woven by colonial scholarship.⁶³

Without prior coordination, African writers undertook the task of writing their history, most likely inspired or encouraged by their *marabouts* of the North, but always with the goal of removing the continent from its isolation (imposed or consented to) and restoring it to its rightful place in the development of humanity.⁶⁴ Alongside their foreign counterparts, the members of these “schools” produced remarkable studies and participated significantly in scholarly inquiry and in restoring the dignity of the historical discipline in Africa. Their theories and methodologies were controversial and often debated, but they were made in the heat of polemical disputes. The schools took a decisive step forward in terms of research, producing much important scholarly work. The task of their successors was to surpass their objective limits and to reformulate the central debates of the field. This took place through a deconstruction of the limiting myths and stereotypes of African history, as well as through a broad reconstruction of paradigms that offered new knowledge and new methodological approaches. Historians produced numerous regional histories in both African and metropolitan centers of excellence, creating a balance between continental and global perspectives.

For quite some time, the task was to surpass the first mission of the precursors of the “schools,” to write—or rewrite—African history in order to investigate new questions. This approach offered a way to break with or avoid a cloistering that threatened to distance the discipline from global currents and to limit it to arbitrary subjects or geographical zones, and to militant and subjective perspectives. This was and remains an urgent goal insofar as, from a methodological perspective, such an objective is broadly justifiable and achievable. Fortunately, following independence the second generation of African historians set themselves to this task. They were better connected to the epistemological processes of globalization and to the new methods of intellectual production. Better integration of laboratories and research networks gave these scholars a broader point of view that allowed them to shatter the disciplinary isolation that had constrained their predecessors.

The work of generations

Each generation of African historians participated in its part of the “mission” of rewriting the history of the continent, inspired by the context in which they produced their scholarship, expressing dominant paradigms and methodological possibilities.

Just as the postwar generation of historians fought against the colonial project and the postindependence generation distinguished itself in the militancy of “national construction” and the rewriting of African history, following generations integrated themselves into more global currents and paradigms that surpassed national and neocolonial spaces. Less ideologically involved, this generation of historians has only a distant relationship to the colonial system. For the most part they did not experience it directly, even if its intellectual heritage was broadly present in the structures of their education. They work in a context of *globalization* that has followed a *crisis of nationalism*. The subjects of their work are distant from the studies of localities, and they are interested in more cross-disciplinary and interdisciplinary themes.⁶⁵ Their methodologies also appear more open, offering more possibilities for investigation and for the juxtaposition of studies. Polemics have increasingly given way to collaboration among researchers from all continents and all social scientific disciplines, in a manner that is less indebted to academic forms of control and nationalist ideologies.

The first few generations of African historians have thus laid the foundation of an authentic knowledge of the histories of different regions, which together give the continent a common identity. It is quite possible today to synthesize these works and to integrate them into more general chronologies, effectively breaking the marginalization of many centuries. This seems to be the path toward a global history of Africa, which gives meaning to the totality of national, regional and local histories.

African history and global history

Much of the writing on African history has considered links to other parts of the world, and it is these traditions that historians of Africa can build upon. During the past few decades, historians have emphasized three major events in particular to chart connections between Africa and the rest of the world: the penetration of the continent by Islam, the Atlantic slave trade and colonization. In this view, the slave trade signified a sustained opening of the continent to the Atlantic region and its integration into commercial networks and the “world economy”—in other words, its integration into world history, as even African historians sometimes suggest. As Abdoulaye Ly wrote of this trend,

Indeed, once we left behind the colonial frameworks that had too long structured the teaching of history, we turned almost immediately to developments that linked Africa to other continents. Most immediately, we considered the commerce of seventeenth-century black Africa—including, necessarily, the slave trade—and we saw it as an essential connection between world history and African history, but also as the first relatively sure way to access this history through the use of sources written by the colonizer.⁶⁶

This dominant thought, especially the idea that the Atlantic constitutes the space of exchange and culture, structured all African theories and “schools” that emerged after the colonial period. Yet the logic that sees the Sahara and the Atlantic as opposites reinforces the idea that the African continent, and all its regions, was entirely subject to external influences (economic, political and intellectual). But connecting to these external trends might be seen as a quest for a historical legitimacy granted by the colonial intellectual aristocracy. The grave danger of that way of thinking is that it sees the beginning of African history as simultaneous with the emergence of these external contributions. It does so especially at the level of methodology, via the integration of the continent into the national histories and periodization of the colonizers. It is abundantly clear that historians systematically privileged external sources in the writing and rewriting of this history. This approach thus often created an “underhistory” characteristic of a sub-Saharan Africa inhabited by indigenous blacks, “the lumpenproletariat of the peripheral centers of a world system whose hubs resided in the North hemisphere.”⁶⁷ Such was the characterization of Africa: “black” and “sub-Saharan,” truly subaltern and peripheral!

It seems important in the light of new debates on history to break with the fetishism of the slave trade and colonialism as the only way to study African history in global terms. This is the best route to legitimate knowledge produced according to established scholarly norms—not granted or legitimated according to the criteria of an intellectual authority (for the South) or of the “*marabouts* of the North.”⁶⁸ While questions tied to the slave trade and colonization have been studied intensively due to the abundance of documentation and their connection to the history of other continents, it is clear that other periods, from the ancient to the postmodern, are just as interesting and important. The same goes for geographic zones other than the Atlantic that also evidence long-term contacts and the long-term evolution of African peoples such as the Sahara and Indian Ocean regions.

Eurocentric conceptions of history have long predominated, with their “pseudoscientific racism” and cultural chauvinism.⁶⁹ This conception has long weighed on African history, of which different versions could be nothing but regional. The study of all historical periods and all geographical regions of the continent is a major scholarly objective, and there is no question of handing it over to specialized groups or interested persons. There is likewise no question of making it the exclusive business of Africans. History, “the only sector in Africa that has not been nationalized,” testifies to the living relationship between Africa and the world.⁷⁰

Connection to the world

For as long as victimization was the mobilizing cause for African history, as it was beginning in the 1950s, the results of this history remained the antithesis of the ideal objective of such engagement, namely a balanced effort to establish historical truth. Thus, as long as it was imperative to destroy restrictive myths and stereotypes, there was always the risk of falling into the traps already condemned here: a nostalgic history of “commemoration” or “navel-gazing,” or even self-aggrandizement and sectarianism, with no place in its schema for the “other.” Complex, difficult situations within Africa

arose from the abuse of history, namely an incompatibility between official national histories and local histories that emphasized various particularities meant that it was impossible to anticipate several rebellions and "tribal wars" on the continent. These disjunctions revealed the fragile equilibria of the young African nations and their nationalist projects: the secession of Katanga illustrates this, as does the Nigerian Civil War in the 1960s; the Rwandan Genocide; the ethnically inflected civil wars in Sierra Leon, Liberia and the Congo; and the religious massacres in the Central African Republic over the past three decades—to name only a few examples.⁷¹

Beyond these methodological questions (reasonably settled with respect to certain subjects), writing history raises as many questions as it answers, and the African historian has at times been entangled with extremely problematic ideologies. The so-called intellectuals aligned with the regimes of certain countries have theorized racist, exclusivist and sometimes genocidal ideologies of war. This was true with respect to the notion of "ethnic cleansing," popularized by the "Radio Mille Collines"⁷² station in Rwanda in 1994, or of "ivoirité," a key concept during the war in Ivory Coast.⁷³ The identitarian mistrust at the root of the stigmatization of the "other" is characteristic of societies that lack what may be called a globally national imaginary. This undeclared quest for a "dangerous purity" has been at the origin of recurrent troubles in postindependence Africa.⁷⁴ In all these conflicts, the goal was to construct an "us" distinct from "them," a distinction that presupposed the definition of a conceptual and territorial border, as for the theorists of these new doctrines, "[t]he identification of a self naturally presupposes its differentiation from the other. ... It is not possible to be at once self and other."⁷⁵ The paradox lies in the fact that the valorization of the self and the exclusion of the other cannot take place without knowledge of this "other" and his or her difference. It is this need for knowledge and understanding that dictates an intellectual attitude synonymous with opening to others and the world.

If such a history—yet unwritten—is to be credible, this opening to the world and to other disciplines would be a fortunate outcome. As Kaké has argued, "the wish to reduce historical education only to the history of Africa would be a disagreeable position. The chauvinist historian does a disservice to his country just as the fanatic does a disservice to his religion."⁷⁶ History has always led to contact and opposition among peoples—often tragically—but in the modern world we can all agree that there are no longer isolated peoples.⁷⁷ Despite their turbulent history, African countries are increasingly associated with international life, now that the domain of politics is the entire universe.⁷⁸ Africans are aware of this; moreover, this recognition was the basis of the thought of Léopold Sédar Senghor and his theory of the "Civilization of the Universal."⁷⁹ In what he calls the "Meeting of Giving and Receiving," no people may be left out, and each must contribute its own values. Senghor prefigured globalization well before the fall of the Berlin wall and the end of the Cold War.⁸⁰

Knowledge of the world requires knowledge of its history in all its aspects and components. This further supposes that the citizen of the world must not limit himself or herself to knowledge of one's own country or locality; rather, this "global citizen" has the duty to understand other peoples and all neighboring points of view in space

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and time.⁸¹ The focus on the history of Africa was necessary for the first generation of African writers because of the need to take charge of the history of the continent. This also implied an understanding of a unified Africa, from the Maghreb through Africa south of the Sahara and to Southern Africa. At the same time, this in no way signified a “ghettoization of Africa history.”⁸² As Kaké has said,

A general view of the history of world is essential to those who wish to know the contribution of each social group to the development of humanity, to consider in their full complexity the great contemporary questions, to return to their origins, to pull a few lessons from the past. In these conditions, African history must not be nostalgic, content to evoke ancestors and forerunners and to place the golden age at the beginning of time. The elements of this history must be selected because of their value, not their general interest; it must not tend toward particularism, toward insular and desiccating nationalism, but must develop an attachment to the specificities of localities.⁸³

In sum, and considering the terrain of the African laboratory, global history may be understood as a link between facts and events that connect different regions of the globe. From this viewpoint, the relationship between Africa and the rest of the world is necessarily connected and dialectical, though certainly not without discussion, polemics and stereotypes.⁸⁴ The transnational phenomena studied by this approach are connected by local, national, continental and transcontinental dynamics and the various scholarly and epistemological confrontations among historians, historical schools and historiographies. The prerequisite of global history rests, then, on a *global historiography* in which theoretical, methodological and heuristic contributions—from Africa, India, China, Europe and the Americas—as well as contemporary dynamics and trends are fundamental. It is the decentered narrative of a social, political, economic, cultural or scientific phenomenon that may begin with the study of a local phenomenon whose characteristics relate to other regions of the globe. (This is the approach we take to May 1968 below.) In the end, global history is another response to the identitarian retirement of Africans, to the temptation to secede, to the de-territorialization begotten by colonization and postcolonial re-territorialization—all of which takes place, on the one hand, through the deconstruction of myths and, on the other, through the sense of belonging to a global whole that must be built or rebuilt.

An example of a global history approach: Africa and the events of May 1968

The distinction between “global history” and “world history” is not always clear, given the similarities in their object of study—that is, a space that transcends national territorial frameworks. Global history cannot be a history of all societies of the world; rather, it necessarily considers local and temporal specificities encompassing all fields of study and all regions of the world. It brings together the large-scale stages of these

societies—even if they are not synchronized with each other—a task that presupposes a history of large global transitions, perturbations, common changes, encounters and clashes, revolutions, and so on.

Societies have developed along internal lines, each according to its own values and trajectory, unaware of or subsuming others. New worlds have emerged from the encounters among them, shaped by new balances of power that have, throughout history, defined for them all a form of “globalization” shaped by the eyes and goals of the strongest powers. Different imperialisms and systems of domination can thus be seen as attempts at globalization in which many parts of the globe emerged from isolation and were integrated—often by force—into the global currents of the period, whether Roman antiquity, the Atlantic slave trade, mercantile capitalism, colonization, the Cold War and so on. Africa was at the heart of this process of peripheralization and domination, of course, but it became part of the globalization that these processes undergirded. This process led finally to the erection of a “global village” with which everyone identifies despite various inequalities and dysfunctions.⁸⁵ In his definition of the “civilization of the Universal,” Léopold Sédar Senghor speaks of the meeting of “all peoples” and all cultures, by which he signifies not confrontation but rather reciprocity.⁸⁶ Global history, too, seeks to study this enlarged transnational frame.

An approach focused on events but spanning these largest stages of the evolution of world societies allows us to begin writing a global history, which operates at a planetary scale but does not necessarily include all the world’s countries. It may be accomplished, for instance, through the intersection of the histories of capitalism, religion, migrations and ideas, among others. This approach allows us to see the links that exist among different parts of the world—Africa, Europe, Asia and America—and allows us to discover the connections among these spaces by an investigation of any social movement, such as the worldwide “May 1968” movement, which we address in this study.

May 1968 in the world

Comprehending global history—and, as a result, the connections among the societies of the world—is possible, thanks to an approach that devotes specific attention to events. Its goal is the de-territorialization of events by connecting their common elements across time and space. Indeed, although the May 1968 movement, a world youth revolt, did not systematically affect every city in the world, it was widespread in world capitals—large cities like Prague, Paris, Cairo, Dakar, New York, Chicago, Berlin, Frankfurt and others where university students expressed their particular concerns. The similarity and simultaneity of these movements, which unfolded at the same time across varied and distant spaces, organized around the same motivations, makes a global study of this event possible.

An explosion of ideas influenced youth across the world in the 1960s, a process that reached its global acme in 1968, when student protests at Berkeley spread throughout the world. Consequently, it is possible to understand the connection among all these youth movements and the shared desire for freedom by ill-appreciated youth; the

collusion among regimes who faced, individually and together, this wave of international contestation; and the extent of the repression with the entry of tanks in Czechoslovakia, the charge of the CRS in Paris or the police invasion of the Dakar campus. Thus, similarities existed not only among youth movements, as in Senegal and France, but also in the interactions between the respective presidents of these countries: Léopold Sédar Senghor and Charles de Gaulle. It was also an era of diffuse influences between centers of protest on a global level. Each protested in the name of group interests (university students), of ideologies (left-wing ideas), against domestic heroes (critiquing Négritude in Senegal) or by invoking the issue of Vietnam, which elicited various reactions depending on the country. At these demonstrations, it was essential to integrate various causes, such as the protests against communism in Prague and those against “spoiled children” in both the United States and Dakar.⁸⁷ Together, all these factors linked the rebellious global youth movements.

With ideas transcending borders, these movements established substantive connections with each other. The university was one point of departure, serving everywhere as the motor of the social movements that went on to shape forms of governance in the coming years. It is necessary to consider not only the Cold War context and the state of the world economy but also the psychological disposition of the young people who believed it necessary to seize life in the present moment. In this sense, the global social movement of 1968 had a revolutionary impact on the world. Following the example of their colleagues across the world, the youth of Dakar took part, protesting in the name of the Vietnamese people, laying claim to left-wing ideas and declaring their desire for societal change.⁸⁸

The goal of studying this example is to search for the roots and interconnections in the events that took place on a global scale and that shared common ideas. This takes the form of an “aggregation of local histories” that gives meaning to a “global history” but does not negate local histories. This project presupposes that the authors of global histories do not limit their understanding of a locality but are up-to-date on what is taking place in other parts of the world. All parts of the world constitute thereby a global whole, thanks to the imbrication and mutual dependence across all ages and historical (and even prehistorical) periods. As a result, the study of transnational phenomena transcends spaces, whether physically or mentally territorialized, to privilege a global approach to all regions and civilizations of the world.

Global history is thus a history rooted locally in order to extend globally, taking account of links between different event-producing centers and of the interdisciplinarity that leads to an exhaustive understanding of related facts. It is this inclusive approach that places Africa at the heart of world history.

Conclusion

African history has seen numerous twists and turns, often tumultuous and tragic, but always moored to the history of the world, to which it never ceased to be connected.

However, it took several centuries of epic struggle to secure recognition of Africa's rightful place in this history. Several generations of Africanists, African and non-African, have led this fight. Beyond the construction of nationalist chronologies, which accompanied the birth of young African nations and which fought against stereotypes, the goal has been to address questions pertinent across the world in novel and relevant ways. One thing is clear: much remains to be done in constructing an African historical narrative that dominant paradigms have sought for centuries to distort or render invisible. Today, scholars are revisiting and re-problematizing these paradigms in the light of new sources and new methodological approaches. The work of the pioneers cleared the way for a pluridisciplinarity that testifies to the avowed intention of new generations of African researchers to address incisive subjects on a continent definitively connected to global history—one that strives to study the world through the diversity of its spaces, its peoples, their memories and their different practices.

Notes

1. The distinction between global history and world history is often unclear. In the present text, we attempt to explore the nuances of this distinction to see how we may place Africa at the heart of the problematics and currents of global history.
2. Herodotus, the Greek historian dubbed “the father of history,” established connections between ancient Europe and Africa, especially with pharaonic Egypt. Cheikh Anta Diop used his writings to argue for his controversial thesis of a black pharaonic Egypt. See Cheikh Anta Diop, *Nations nègres et culture* (Paris: Présence Africaine, 1979). Herodotus's Greek compatriots, the historian Diodorus Siculus and the geographer Strabo contributed to knowledge of the Greek world and its relation to the rest of the world.
3. Leo Frobenius, “hero of the black cause,” enjoyed much success among African historians and inspired the writings of Négritude theorists like Senghor.
4. In the valley of the Omo in East Africa, Professor Leakey's team discovered the skeletal remains of the oldest men, which allowed him to argue for Africa as the cradle of humanity. In other words, human history began in Africa.
5. Robert Cornevin and Marianne Cornevin, *Histoire de l'Afrique: des origines à la deuxième guerre mondiale* (Paris: Payot, 1970); Basil Davidson, *Africa, History of a Continent* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1966); Hubert Deschamps (ed.), *Histoire générale de l'Afrique noire* (Paris: PUF, vol. I 1970 & vol. II 1971); Joseph Ki-Zerbo, *Histoire générale de l'Afrique, d'hier à demain* (Paris: Hatier, 1972); Roland Oliver and John Donnell Fage, *A Short History of Africa* (Baltimore, 1962).
6. Fernand Braudel, *Écrits sur l'histoire* (Paris: Flammarion, 1969).
7. M. Samir Amin, “Préface,” in Boubacar Barry, *Le royaume du Waalo* (Paris: Maspero, 1972), 7–4.
8. See Jack Goody, *Le vol de l'histoire. Comment l'Europe a imposé le récit de son passé au reste du monde (The Theft of History)* (Paris: Gallimard, 2010), 496; Pekka Masonen, *The Negroland Revisited. Discovery and Invention of the Sudanese Middle Ages* (Helsinki: Finnish Academy of Science and Letters, 2000).
9. We must note that, increasingly, regional history and the history of localities are today increasingly neglected in favor of global history.

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10. Philip Curtin, Steven Feierman, Leonard Thompson and Jan Vansina, *African History, from Earliest Times to Independence* (London and New York: Longman, 1995).
11. Questions surrounding oral sources and their credibility imply questions about the credibility of African history, reliant as it is on such sources. These questions hindered the progress of the field until the appearance of major works by Yves Person, Djibril Tamsir Niane, Diouldé Laya, Boubou Hama, Amadou Hampâté Bâ, Jan Vansina and others. Despite their issues, historians now recognize the value of oral sources, which have contributed to important work (even if most of these historians tend to conflate the categories of *history* and *oral sources*).
12. Catherine Coquery-Vidrovitch, *La découverte de l'Afrique, l'Afrique noire atlantique, des origines au xviii^e siècle* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2003).
13. The "Colonial Academy," created in 1922, was one of several institutions dedicated to understanding colonial societies. The same goal led to the establishment in Dakar of IFAN (*Institut Français d'Afrique Noire*, or French Institute of Black Africa, which later became the Cheikh Anta Diop Fundamental Institute of Black Africa), which contributed enormously to collecting information on societies and the environment in West Africa and beyond.
14. Catherine Coquery-Vidrovitch, "Réflexions comparées sur l'historiographie africaniste de langue française et anglais," *Politique africaine* 66 (1997), 91–100; I. Thioub "L'École de Dakar' et' et la production d'une écriture académique de l'histoire," in Momar Coumba Diop (ed.), *Le Sénégal contemporain* (Paris, Karthala, 2002), 109–53. Patrick Manning, "African and World Historiography," *The Journal of African History* 54:3 (2013), 319–30.
15. P. D. Curtin, "Tendances récentes des recherches historiques africaines et contribution à l'histoire en général," *Histoire générale de l'Afrique* (Unesco-Jeune Afrique, 1980), 77–95.
16. In his controversial *Dakar* speech (July 26, 2007), the president of the French Republic, Nicolas Sarkozy, declared that "Africans have not fully entered into history," provoking outrage and recentering persistent racial stereotypes. See Jean-Paul Chrétien (dir.), *L'Afrique de Sarkozy: un déni d'histoire* (Paris: Karthala, 2008). (A number of books that provoked further outrage were published following this controversy.)
17. The African diaspora has played an especially important role in this process. In the decades that preceded independence, Africans and their diasporic kin throughout Europe, the Americas and the Caribbean engaged in a vigorous cultural revival, founded on a literary production that touched on the entire world of experience of Africans.

Indeed, a dynamic African diaspora in these regions set to work claiming specificity and unique values, most often drawing connections to their African origins. Likewise, the need for identitarian affirmation and the refusal of cultural and intellectual marginalization served as a basis for cultural movements such as *la Négritude* and for claims to their portion of the "global," such as that expressed through Léopold Sédar Senghor's conception of the Universal.

P. D. Curtin, "Préface," *Histoire générale de l'Afrique* (Unesco-Jeune Afrique, 1980), 9–14. See also Omar Gueye, "Léopold Sédar Senghor, un universel fondamental," *Ethiopiennes, Dakar, Revue Négro-africaine de Littérature et de Philosophie* no. 76, 1er (Semestre 2006), 249–57.

18. Valentin Y. Mudimbe, *The Invention of Africa: Gnosis, Philosophy, and the Order of Knowledge* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1988). Masonen, *The Negroland Revisited*.
19. Manning, "African and World Historiography," 326.

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20. The North and the South were influenced respectively by the dominant Arab and European cultures and have differentiated themselves from the “other” Africa, black and sub-Saharan, despite being part of regional and continental political and economic organizations. In certain books, journals and museum collections, North—and white—Africa, often extended south to Mauritania, is even removed from the African continent and gratuitously attached to the Near East or the Mediterranean. However, we must note the presence of economically and intellectual influential minorities, such as Indians and others, in Uganda, Kenya and other Anglophone countries.
21. See Pierre Legendre, *Tour du monde des concepts* (Paris: Fayard, 2014).
22. See François-Xavier Fauvelle-Aymar, *La mémoire aux enchères. L'idéologie afrocentriste à l'assaut de l'histoire* (Paris: Verdier, 2009); Cheikh Anta Diop, *Civilisation ou barbarie* (Paris: Présence Africaine, 1981).
23. Increasingly, Centers for African-American and African Studies (CAAS) have proliferated in American universities, where various disciplines—anthropology, sociology, history, and others—have taken an interest in African and diaspora studies. The world saw an expansion of the discipline with the creation of the African Studies Association (ASA) in the United States in 1960, the first World Congress of Africanists in Accra in 1962 and the granting of 300 doctorates in the field in American universities between 1970 and 1972 (Curtin, “Tendances récentes des recherches historiques africaines et contribution à l'histoire en general,” 75–95).
24. We must note the contributions of major writers like Edward Wilmot Blyden (*African Life and Customs*. London: C. M. Phillips, 1908), William E. Dubois (*Africa in Battle against Colonialism, Racialism, Imperialism*, 1960) and George Padmore (*Africa: Britain's Third Empire*. London: Dennis Dobson, 1949) and the continuation of their work in journals like “SANKOFA.”
25. Manning, “African and World Historiography.”
26. *Cambridge History of Africa*, edited by Cambridge University Press, 8 volumes between 1975 and 1986; *Histoire générale de l'Afrique*, edited in 8 volumes by UNESCO in collaboration with *Jeune Afrique*, les Nouvelles Editions Africaines-NEA, Edicef et Présence Africaine.
27. Bogumil Jewsiewicki and David Newbury (eds.), *African Historiographies: What History for Which Africa?* (London: Sage, 1986).
28. Mamadou Diouf, “Historians and Histories: What For? African Historiography between the State and the Communities” (SEPHIS-CSSSC, 2003).
29. Abdoulaye Ly, *La compagnie du Sénégal* (Paris: Ifan-Karthala, 1993). Cheikh Anta Diop, *Nations nègres et culture* (Paris: Présence Africaine, 1979), 2 vols.
30. Boubacar Barry, *Sénégal: plaidoyer pour une histoire régionale* (SEPHIS-CEEA, 2001), 50.
31. *Ibid.*, 51.
32. See Joseph Ki-Zerbo, *Histoire générale de l'Afrique, d'hier à demain*. Djibril Tamsir Niane, *Soundiata ou l'épopée mandingue* (Paris: Présence Africaine, 1961). Ibrahima Baba Kaké, *Combats pour l'histoire africaine* (Paris: Présence Africaine, 1982). Sékéné-Mody Cissoko, *Histoire de l'Afrique Occidentale: Moyen-âge et temps modernes, VIIIe siècle-1850* (Paris: Présence Africaine, 1966). Elikia M'bokolo, *L'Afrique noire. Histoire et civilisation*, in collaboration with Sophie Le Callennec, Hatier (Paris, 1992), 2 vols. Boubacar Barry, *Le royaume du Waalo. Le Sénégal avant la conquête* (Paris: Karthala, 1985). The slogan was that of Patrice Lumumba, founder of the National Congolese Movement (MNC), toward the end of the 1950s and leader of the political struggle for the independence of his country and African unity.

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33. A nonexhaustive list of those from Paris 7 and the Sorbonne: Théophile Obenga, Achille Mbembe, Mamadou Diouf, Mohamed Mbodj, Yoro Fall, Mamadou Fall, Babacar Fall, Aboubacry Moussa Lam, Babacar Sall, Rokhaya Fall, Ibrahima Thioub and Ndiouga Adrien Benga.
34. Lansiné Kaba, Mamadou Diouf, Mohamed Mbodj, Ousmane Kane, Cheikh Babou, Emmanuel Akyeampong, Philip Curtin, Patrick Manning, Martin Klein, Frederick Cooper, Aly Dramé and Ibra Sène were among the many African historians in American universities.
35. Kaké, *Combats pour l'histoire africaine*, 38.
36. "Our ancestors the Gauls" was the French assimilationist program taught to the young students of the colonies and from which they wished to free themselves. The exponents of the "black Egypt" thesis, such as Cheikh Anta Diop, have been accused of seeking at any price a black Egyptian origin of civilization in an attempt to respond to the long centuries of exclusion suffered by the African continent in general and blacks in particular.
37. Curtin, "Tendances récentes des recherches historiques africaines et contribution à l'histoire en général," 77–95, 91–92.
38. Rightly or wrongly, oral traditions have been accused of being nostalgic or navel-gazing, allegedly containing exaggerations or approximations that foreclose the possibility of any historical or scholarly value.
39. The literature is filled with works explicating these notions of racial difference and inequality—works that have been the object of numerous criticisms. Among them are Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Leçons de la philosophie de l'histoire*, transl. J. Gibelin (Paris: Vrin, 1979). Joseph Arthur de Gobineau, *Essai sur l'inégalité des races humaines* (Paris: Firmin-Didot, 1884); R. Placide Tempels, *La Philosophie bantoue* (Paris: Présence Africaine, 1959); and many others.
40. As soon as he became aware of them, Aimé Césaire defended the arguments developed by Cheikh Anta Diop in *Nations nègres et culture* and engaged fully to the avant-garde of the Négritude movement he launched with Léopold Sédar Senghor and Léon Gontran Damas. However, because of ideological and political disagreements, Senghor was less inclined to share or defend Cheikh Anta Diop's arguments.
41. Kaké, *Combats pour l'histoire africaine*, 27.
42. Ibid.
43. In 1947, Alioune Diop created the publishing house *Présence Africaine* and its journal of culture in the black world, promoting the voices of African authors who wished to make themselves heard and distribute their writings. Diop, *Nations nègres et culture*, 2 vols. (1st edition 1954). Aimé Césaire, *Cahier d'un retour au pays natal* (Paris: Présence Africaine, 1956), 94.
44. See also Barry, *Sénégal: plaidoyer pour une histoire régionale*, 31.
45. This struggle was led by a number of writers and activists such as William E. Du Bois, Marcus Garvey, Price, Frantz Fanon, Langston Hughes, the "Black Renaissance" movement and others, just as the Négritude movement benefited from the meeting of Léopold Sédar Senghor with Aimé Césaire, Jean Price-Mars, Léon-Gontran Damas, René Maran and others from Africa, Haiti and New York (especially participants in the "Harlem Renaissance"). Thus across borders, the desire for unity operated on the continent and in the diaspora on a humanistic but racially conscious basis.
46. Kaké, *Combats pour l'histoire africaine*, 1982, 33.
47. Ernest Renan (1823–1892): « Qu'est-ce qu'une nation? », Sorbonne 1882.

48. Despite a long-standing historical tradition and a centuries-long foreign presence, the global history of Senegal has never been written. The government of Senegal finally decided (in 2014) to write a *General History of Senegal*. This history raises all the questions and methodological issues with which African historians have long grappled.
49. See also Barry, *Sénégal: plaidoyer pour une histoire régionale*, 55.
50. This ideal of the “founding fathers” of the African nations has gone through several stages, indicative of the political development of the continent itself and its symbolic representation in the Organization for African Unity (OAU) founded in 1963 in Addis Ababa (and the precursor to the African Union). Ultimately, countries returned to their national programs, though without necessarily renouncing the Pan-Africanist ideal. Later on, African historians worked within the Association of African Historians—AHA—created in 1972 in Dakar. In the same spirit, the Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa (CODESRIA) was created in 1973 in Dakar, along with the annual journal *Afrika Zamani*. The same moment also saw the creation of the Organization for Social Science Research in Eastern and Southern Africa (OSSREA). The association’s domination by Francophones meant that Anglophone historians like A. F. Ajayi, A. Boahen and B. A. Ogot tended to avoid it.
51. Kaké, *Combats pour l’histoire africaine*, 1982.
52. A number of authors are known for their histories and travel narratives. Some of the most famous include Ibn Battuta, Mahmud Kati, Ibn Khaldun, Al Bakri, Abderrahmane Saâdi.
53. This passage, found in the Quran, demonstrates that borders were not a barrier to the global spread of Islam, a religion with a global mission.
54. The *Ummah*, or world community of believers, is a fundamental notion of Islam that groups together all Muslims of the world, without concern for race, culture or origin. The pilgrimage to Mecca, where they reunite annually, is thus a great moment of communion and solidarity.
55. Curtin, “Tendances récentes des recherches historiques africaines et contribution à l’histoire en général,” 92.
56. Thioub, “L’École de Dakar’ et la production d’une écriture académique de l’histoire.”
57. Jane Burbank and Frederick Cooper, *Empires. De la Chine ancienne à nos jours* (Paris: Payot, 2011), 688. John Donnell Fage, *An Introduction to the History of West Africa* (Cambridge, 1955). Lord Hailey, *An African Survey. A Study of Problems Arising in Africa South of Sahara* (Oxford University Press, 1957). Authors such as Michael Crowder, John Donnell Fage, Lord Haley or Donald Cruis O’Brien, among others, have made an important contribution to the global history of Africa. Michael Crowder, editor of the *Journal of African History*, was one of the most prolific African historians.
58. Numerous sources in Ajami—African languages written with Arabic characters—have opened up knowledge of African societies, which used Arabic writing to transcribe their texts in the local languages. On this question, see David Robinson, “Fulfulde Literature in Arabic Script,” *History in Africa*, no. 9 (1982), 251–61. Fallou Ngom, “Ajami Scripts in the Senegalese Speech Community,” *Journal of Arabic and Islamic Studies* 10 (2010), 1–23; Oslo, edited by Alex Metcalfe.
59. African countries confront this issue in all areas that see waves of emigration to the countries of the North, particularly their universities. In the context of research on African history, the numerous facilities and fora regularly organized by these institutions offer opportunities for study and publication that would be difficult to reproduce in Africa now. This does, however, give meaning to the sharing of resources for research and researchers.

60. Pioneers like Abdoulaye Ly and Cheikh Anta Diop cleared the path first for anticolonial militancy and later for the radical opposition to postcolonial power. They were followed by their young colleagues—Joseph Ki-Zerbo, Ahmadou Makhtar Mbow, Assane Seck, Sékéné Mody Cissoko, Iba Der Thiam, Abdoulaye Bathily, Alpha Oumar Konaré, Laurent Bagbo, Henriette Diabaté, among others—some of whom led political parties and competed for the presidencies of their respective countries (Senegal, Burkina Faso, Mali, etc.). Laurent Bagbo, for instance, was president of Côte d'Ivoire, and Alpha Oumar Konaré was president of Mali.
61. Barry, *Sénégalbie: plaidoyer pour une histoire régionale*, 36.
62. Kenneth Onwuka Dike, *Trade and Politics in the Niger Delta, 1830–1885: An Introduction to the Economic and Political History of Nigeria* (Oxford, 1956).
63. Thioub, “L'École de Dakar' et la production d'une écriture académique de l'histoire.”
64. Professor Boubacar Barry used the phrase “marabouts' of the North” to designate the intellectual authorities found in European universities or the “North” in general that African writers looked to validate their scholarship. See Boubacar Barry, “Preface,” in Babacar Fall (ed.), *Le travail forcé en Afrique Occidentale Française, 1900–1946* (Paris: Karthala, 1993).
65. We can nonetheless see revivals in theses defended at Dakar by Mamadou Fall (“Terroirs et territoires dans la formation de l'espace régional ouest-africain,” Dakar, Université Cheikh Anta Diop, 2014) and Rokhaya Fall (“Le Saalum de la fin du XVI^e siècle au milieu du XIX^e siècle. Populations, espaces et histoire,” Dakar, Université Cheikh Anta Diop, 2014, 601) and in the ongoing writing of a *General History of Senegal*, which raises many interesting questions regarding a locality-based approach.
66. Ly, *La Compagnie du Sénégal*, VII.
67. Sophie Dulucq, *Écrire l'histoire de l'Afrique à l'époque coloniale (XIX^e-XX^e siècles)* (Paris: Karthala, 2009), 191. Joseph Ki-Zerbo, “Introduction générale,” in *Histoire générale de l'Afrique* (Unesco-Jeune Afrique, 1980), 34.
68. Barry, “Preface.”
69. Curtin, “Tendances récentes des recherches historiques africaines et contribution à l'histoire en général,” 77–95.
70. Kaké, *Combats pour l'histoire africaine*, 36.
71. Yves Benot, *L'idéologie des indépendances* (Paris: Maspero, 1964), 427.
72. The famous “Radio-Télévision libre des Mille collines” (RTL) played a large role in the genocide in which, between April and June 1994, between 800,000 and one million Tutsis and moderate Hutus were massacred in Rwanda. With its propaganda calling on “true Rwandans”—Hutus—to massacre the “cockroaches”—the Tutsis—who were thus not part of the human species, the broadcasts became the symbol of the genocide.
73. “Ivoirité,” a concept that aimed to define Ivorian nationality, appeared in 1945 in Dakar among Ivorian students. It reappeared with President Henri Konan Bédié in 1993, who reused the concept to push aside his opponent Alassane Ouattara. The new definition rested on ethnic, religious and geographical differences. A person would be Ivorian only if his four grandparents had been born in Côte d'Ivoire, which led to feelings of exclusion among populations with foreign-sounding names, who were suspected of being bad Ivorians. This opportunistic definition of “ivoirité” betrayed a term that had originally embodied a positive cultural concept, that is, the “Ivorian miracle,” or the mixing, in Ivory Coast, of elements from many subregional populations, contributing to the creation of a melting pot that could serve as an example to many societies on the continent. This prior definition contributed enormously to the economic power of the country in terms of production and prosperity.”

African History and Global History: Revisiting Paradigms

(See “L’ivoirité, ou les dérives d’un discours identitaire,” interview of Soeuf Elbadawi with Sidiki Kaba, *Africultures*.)

74. Bernard Henri-Lévi, *La pureté dangereuse* (Paris: Grasset, 1994).
75. Curdiphe, “L’ivoirité, ou l’esprit du nouveau contrat social du Président H.K. Bédié,” Actes du forum Curdiphe du 20 au 23 mars 1996, publiés sous la direction de Saliou Touré, in *Ethics*, revue de la Curdiphe, Presses universitaires d’Abidjan, 1996.
76. Kaké, *Combats pour l’histoire africaine*, 28–29.
77. Samuel P. Huntington, *Le choc des civilisations* (Paris: Odile Jacob, 1997), 5p. Samuel Huntington, a former Harvard professor, originated the idea of the “clash of civilizations” in an eponymous article published in *Foreign Affairs* in 1993. His controversial point of view puts the cultures of the world in perspective and outlines a global context that presupposes the existence of distinct civilizations that are in conflict with each other.
78. *Ibid.*
79. Léopold Sédar Senghor, *Liberté 3: Négritude et civilisation de l’Universel*, discours, conférences (Paris: Le Seuil, 1977).
80. The fall of the Berlin Wall, symbol of the bipolarization of the world into Eastern and Western blocs, announced the end of the Cold War. The date of November 9, 1989, theoretically marked the end of a conflict that came to an end through its own internationalization, caught between two conceptions of the world (“Weltanschauung”). The dismantling of the Soviet Union was the sign of a new globalization in the name of the globalization of capitalist/liberal concepts that had finally overcome socialism and communism. This new redistribution announced a new order and a new globalization that, like the others, carried its own set of certainties and contradictions at all levels—political, economic, cultural and so on.
81. *Nous sommes 7 milliards de voisins*, Radio France Internationale.
82. Ref. Philip Curtin, *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, March 3, 1995.
83. Kaké, *Combats pour l’histoire africaine*, 1986, 28–29.
84. At the time of writing, the spread of Ebola has provoked fears of an epidemic in Africa. Much like HIV, this virus without a cure demands a global solution but reinforces certain stereotypes and can isolate the continent once again.
85. “Global village” is an expression Marshall McLuhan used to describe the effects of globalization on the media, information technologies and communication. The possible unity of the entire world under one culture suggests the notion that the world is one and the same community, one and the same village. See Marshall McLuhan, *The Medium Is the Message* (London: Penguin Books, 1967).
86. Léopold Sédar Senghor, *Liberté 5: Le Dialogue des cultures* (Paris: Le Seuil, 1992).
87. In Senegal, President Senghor described the students protesting against neocolonialism as “spoiled children.” He critiqued their mode of operation by attacking their ideological references, especially Maoism, which he critiqued at length in his “speech to the nation” on May 30, 1968.
88. Omar Gueye, *Mai 1968 au Sénégal: Senghor face aux étudiants et au mouvement syndical* (Paris: Karthala, 2017).